

**Testimony in support of
House Joint Resolution No. 52**

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Working in the field of addiction, the fundamental reality regarding economic and social impacts associated with gambling addiction is that economic impacts tend to be positive for the State, however, social impacts tend to be negative on Montana's families.

Gambling has presented Montana with some of the following challenges:

- In 1997, 78% of Montanans gambled in some form (including raffles as well as casino games), wagering \$239 million, with 94% of it on video machines.
- About 3.6% of all Montanans are problem or pathological gamblers and 8.5% of the Indian population, wagering a disproportionate amount spent on gambling – 37% of video revenue, 29% of live keno, 17% of lottery and 13% of live bingo.
- 93% of the gambling establishments hold alcohol licenses.
- Increased gambling is statistically correlated with increases in six types of crime: burglary, larceny/theft, robbery, vandalism, DUIs and weapons offenses. For each million spent on gambling 172 more crimes will occur.
- Pathological and problem gamblers informally admit to a very high incidence of illegal acts, divorce, bankruptcy, credit problems, domestic violence, drug and alcohol dependence, depression and suicide attempts.

Montana currently does not have the structure to support a prevention and treatment system for problem or pathological gamblers. This interim study would assist in providing structure for the following needs:

- Design and implement a gambling treatment system;
- Programming (outcome measures, need for standards, evidence-based programming);
- Certification and licensing for individuals and agencies;

The Addictive & Mental Disorders Division respectfully asks your support of HJ Resolution No. 52.